



NEWS



**For Immediate Release
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DOE Announces Expansion of Uranium Leasing Program

(Grand Junction, CO) — The U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management (DOE–LM) today announced that the Uranium Leasing Program Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) has been finalized and that a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is being issued for the preferred “Expanded Program” alternative. Under this alternative, DOE–LM will continue the Uranium Leasing Program, extending the 13 existing leases for a 10-year period, and offering additional leases (up to 25 lease tracts) to the domestic uranium industry for the same 10-year period. This decision supports the intent of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 while also providing a source of revenue to the federal government from mining royalties.

In making the decision, DOE–LM reviewed and considered all comments received on the draft document during the public review process. In response to those comments, the final PEA now includes: (1) clarification of the purpose, need, and scope; (2) a more realistic ore production and transportation evaluation for the expanded leasing program; (3) an expanded discussion of the potential affects of an ore haul truck accident; (4) additional stipulations that will be incorporated into all future lease documents to address specific critical issues, including collaboration with other federal, state, and local agencies to identify, assess, and implement actions to lessen local traffic impacts.

For more than 30 years, DOE has administered numerous leaseholder operations, including exploration, mine-development, and extraction of material, without any significant environmental impacts. Additionally, DOE was proactive in successfully completing reclamation

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activities at its legacy abandoned uranium mine sites that dated back to the 1950s and 1960s. DOE-LM is now preparing to extend that critical stewardship role into the future for another 10-year period.

“Under the Expanded Program alternative, DOE-LM will assure that the public’s health and welfare and the environment are protected. The leaseholders are required to comply with all applicable statutes, rules and regulations and are required to post reclamation performance bonds that are sufficient to fund the ultimate reclamation of their respective lease operations,” said Tracy Plessinger, DOE-LM.

After assuring that the leases contain all necessary provisions and stipulations, DOE-LM will extend the 13 active leases to the current leaseholders and will proceed with the solicitation process for exploration and mining of up to 25 additional lease tracts.

A link to the PEA and FONSI documents can be found on the DOE-LM website at http://www.lm.doe.gov/land/sites/uranium_leasing/uranium_leasing.htm. Hard copies (paper or CD) of the documents can be requested by calling 1-800-399-5618 or by sending an email to ulcomments@gjo.doe.gov.

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